

# Seattle Municipal Code

*Title 23 - LAND USE CODE*



*Subtitle III Land Use Regulations*

*Division 2 Authorized Uses and Development Standards*

*Chapter 23.54 - Quantity and Design Standards for Access and Off-Street Parking*

---

## **SMC 23.54.020 Parking quantity exceptions**

The parking quantity exceptions set forth in this section apply in all zones except downtown zones, which are regulated by Section 23.49.019 , and Major Institution zones, which are regulated by Section 23.54.016 .

A. Adding Units to Existing Structures in Multifamily and Commercial Zones.

1. For the purposes of this section, "existing structures" means those structures that were established under permit, or for which a permit has been granted and has not expired as of the applicable date, as follows:

a. In multifamily zones, August 10, 1982;

b. In commercial zones, June 9, 1986.

2. If an existing residential structure in a multifamily or commercial zone has parking that meets the development standards, and the lot area is not increased, one (1) unit may be added without additional parking. If two (2) units are added, one (1) space will be required; three (3) units will require two (2) spaces, etc. Additional parking must meet all development standards for the particular zone.

3. In a Lowrise Duplex/Triplex zone:

a. When an existing residential structure provides less than one (1) parking space per unit, one (1) parking space is required for each additional dwelling unit when dwelling units are added to the structure or the structure is altered to create additional dwelling units;

b. When an existing nonresidential structure is partially or completely converted to residential use, then no parking space shall be required for the first new dwelling unit, provided that the lot area is not increased and existing parking is screened and landscaped to the greatest extent practical.

Additional parking provided shall meet all development standards for the Lowrise Duplex/Triplex zone.



4. If an existing structure does not conform to the development standards for parking, or is occupied by a nonconforming use, no parking space is required for the first new or added dwelling unit, provided:

a. The lot area is not increased and existing parking is screened and landscaped to the greatest extent practical.

b. Additional parking provided shall meet all development standards for the particular zone.



c. This exception shall not apply in Lowrise Duplex/Triplex zones.

**B. Tandem Parking in Multifamily Structures.**

1. Off-street parking required for multifamily structures may be provided as tandem parking, as defined in Section 23.54.030 . A tandem parking space counts as one and one-half (1 1/2) parking spaces, except as provided in subsection B2 below, and must meet the minimum size requirements of subsection A of Section 23.54.030 .

2. When a minimum of at least one (1) parking space per dwelling unit in a multifamily structure is required, the total number of parking spaces provided, counting each tandem parking space as one space, may not be less than the total number of dwelling units.

**C. Parking Exception for Landmark Structures.** The Director may reduce or waive the minimum accessory off-street parking requirements for a use permitted in a Landmark structure, or when a Landmark structure is completely converted to residential use according to Sections

23.42.108  or 23.45.006 , or for a use in a Landmark district that is located in a commercial zone, as a special exception pursuant to Chapter 23.76, Procedures for Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions.


1. In making any such reduction or waiver, the Director will assess area parking needs. The Director may require a survey of on- and off-street parking availability. The Director may take into account the level of transit service in the immediate area; the probable relative importance of walk-in traffic; proposals by the applicant to encourage carpooling or transit use by employees; hours of operation; and any other factor or factors considered relevant in determining parking impact.

2. The Director may also consider the types and scale of uses proposed or practical in the Landmark structure, and the controls imposed by the Landmark designation.


3. Such a reduction or waiver may be allowed, for conversion of structures to residential use, only if the Director also determine that there is no feasible way to meet parking requirements on the lot.

**D. Expansion of Existing Nonresidential Uses in Commercial Zones.** In commercial zones additional parking spaces for nonresidential uses are not required for the expansion of existing structures if the minimum parking requirement would not be increased by more than ten (10)

percent. If the minimum parking requirement would be increased by more than ten (10) percent, the parking spaces required for the entire expansion shall be provided. This exception may be used only once for any individual structure.

E. Reductions to required parking in pedestrian-designated zones are permitted according to the provisions of Section 23.54.015  Chart D.

F. Reductions to Minimum Parking Requirements.

1. Reductions to minimum parking requirements permitted by this subsection will be calculated from the minimum parking requirements in Section 23.54.015 . Total reductions to required parking as provided in this subsection may not exceed 40 percent.

2. Transit Reduction.

a. In NC zones and C zones, except pedestrian-designated zones, and in the Seattle Mixed (SM) zone, except on Class 1 Pedestrian Streets, the minimum parking requirement for a nonresidential use, except institutions, may be reduced by 20 percent when the use is located within 800 feet of a street with midday transit service headways of 15 minutes or less in each direction. This distance will be the walking distance measured from the nearest bus stop to the property line of the lot containing the use.

b. In NC, C and SM zones, any minimum parking requirement for a residential use may be reduced by 20 percent when the use is located within 800 feet of a street with midday transit service headways of 15 minutes or less in each direction. This distance will be the walking distance measured from the nearest bus stop to the property line of the lot containing the use.

c. In industrial zones, the minimum parking requirement for a nonresidential use may be reduced by 15 percent when the use is located within 800 feet of a street with peak transit service headways of 15 minutes or less in each direction. This distance will be the walking distance measured from the nearest bus stop to the property line of the lot containing the use.

3. For new or expanding offices or manufacturing uses that require 40 or more parking spaces, the minimum parking requirement may be reduced up to a maximum of 40 percent by the substitution of alternative transportation programs, according to the following provisions:

a. For every certified carpool space accompanied by a cash fee, performance bond or alternative guarantee acceptable to the Director, the total parking requirement will be reduced by 1.9 spaces, up to a maximum of 40 percent of the parking requirement. The Director will consult with the Seattle Rideshare Office in certifying carpool spaces and the location of carpool parking.

b. For every certified vanpool purchased or leased by the applicant for employee use, or equivalent cash fee for purchase of a van by the public ridesharing agency, the total parking requirement will be reduced by six spaces, up to a maximum of 20 percent of the parking requirement. Before a certificate of occupancy may be issued, details

of the vanpool program shall be specified in a Memorandum of Agreement executed between the proponent, the Director, and the Seattle Rideshare Office.

c. If transit or transportation passes are provided with a 50 percent or greater cost reduction to all employees in a proposed structure for the duration of the business establishment(s) within it, or five years, whichever is less, and if transit service is located within 800 feet, the parking requirement shall be reduced by 10 percent. With a 25 percent to 49 percent cost reduction, and if transit service is located within 800 feet, the parking requirement shall be reduced by 5 percent.

d. For every four covered bicycle parking spaces provided, the total parking requirement shall be reduced by one space, up to a maximum of 5 percent of the parking requirement, provided that there is access to an arterial over improved streets.

#### G. Shared Parking.

##### 1. Shared Parking, General Provisions.

a. Shared parking is allowed between two (2) or more uses to satisfy all or a portion of the minimum off-street parking requirement of those uses as provided in subsections G2 and G3.

b. Shared parking is allowed between different categories of uses or between uses with different hours of operation, but not both.

c. A use for which an application is being made for shared parking must be located within eight hundred (800) feet of the parking.

d. No reduction to the parking requirement may be made if the proposed uses have already received a reduction through the provisions for cooperative parking, subsection H.

e. Reductions to parking permitted through shared use of parking will be determined as a percentage of the minimum parking requirement as modified by the reductions permitted in subsections A through F.

f. An agreement providing for the shared use of parking, executed by the parties involved, must be filed with the Director. Shared parking privileges will continue in effect only as long as the agreement, binding on all parties, remains in force. If the agreement is no longer in force, then parking must be provided as otherwise required by this chapter.

##### 2. Shared Parking for Different Categories of Uses.

a. A business establishment may share parking according to only one of the subsections G2b, G2c or G2d.

b. If an office use shares parking with one of the following uses:

(1) general sales and services.

(2) heavy sales and services uses.

(3) eating and drinking establishments.

(4) lodging uses.

(5) entertainment.

(6) medical services.

(7) animal shelters and kennels.

(8) automotive sales and services, or

(9) maritime sales and services;

the parking requirement for the non-office use may be reduced by twenty (20) percent, provided that the reduction will not exceed the minimum parking requirement for the office use.

c. If a residential use shares parking with one of the following uses:

(1) general sales and services,

(2) heavy sales and services uses,

(3) medical services,

(4) animal shelters and kennels,

(5) automotive sales and services, or

(6) maritime sales and services;

the parking requirement for the residential use may be reduced by thirty (30) percent, provided that the reduction does not exceed the minimum parking requirement for the nonresidential use.

d. If an office and a residential use share off-street parking, the parking requirement for the residential use may be reduced by fifty (50) percent, provided that the reduction does not exceed the minimum parking requirement for the office use.

### 3. Shared Parking for Uses With Different Hours of Operation.

a. For the purposes of this section, the following uses will be considered daytime uses:

(1) Commercial uses, except eating and drinking establishments, lodging uses, and entertainment uses;

(2) Storage uses;

(3) Manufacturing uses; and

(4) Other similar primarily daytime uses, when authorized by the Director.

b. For the purposes of this section, the following uses will be considered nighttime or Sunday uses:

- (1) Auditoriums accessory to public or private schools;
- (2) Religious facilities;
- (3) Entertainment uses, such as theaters, bowling alleys, and dance halls;
- (4) Eating and drinking establishments; and
- (5) Other similar primarily nighttime or Sunday uses, when authorized by the Director.

c. Up to ninety (90) percent of the parking required for a daytime use may be supplied by the off-street parking provided by a nighttime or Sunday use and vice-versa, when authorized by the Director, except that this may be increased to one hundred (100) percent when the nighttime or Sunday use is a religious facility.

d. The applicant must show that there is no substantial conflict in the principal operating hours of the uses for which the sharing of parking is proposed.

e. The establishment of park-and-pool lots is permitted, provided that the park-and-pool lot will not use spaces required by another use if there is a substantial conflict in the principal operating hours of the park-and-pool lot and the use.

#### H. Cooperative Parking.

1. Cooperative parking is permitted between two (2) or more business establishments that are commercial uses according to the provisions of this subsection.

2. Up to a twenty (20) percent reduction in the total number of required parking spaces for four (4) or more separate business establishments, fifteen (15) percent reduction for three (3) business establishments, and ten (10) percent reduction for two (2) commercial uses may be authorized by the Director under the following conditions:

a. No reductions to the parking requirement may be made if the proposed business establishments have already received a reduction through the provisions for shared parking, subsection G of this section.

b. Each business establishment for which the application is being made for cooperative parking is located within eight hundred (800) feet of the parking, and the parking is located in a commercial or residential-commercial zone or the Seattle Mixed (SM) zone.

c. The reductions to parking permitted through cooperative parking will be determined as a percentage of the minimum parking requirement as modified by the reductions permitted in subsections A through F of this section.


d. An agreement providing for the cooperative use of parking must be filed with the Director when the facility or area is established as cooperative parking. Cooperative parking privileges will continue in

effect only as long as the agreement to use the cooperative parking remains in force. If the agreement is no longer in force, then parking must be provided as otherwise required by this chapter. New business establishments seeking to meet parking requirements by becoming part of an existing cooperative arrangement must provide the Director with an amendment to the agreement stating their inclusion in the cooperative parking facility or area.


I. Reductions to Minimum Parking Requirements for Department of Parks and Recreation (DOPAR) Community Centers.

1. When family support centers are located within DOPAR community centers, the Director may, upon request by DOPAR, lower the combined parking requirement for the community center and the family support center up to a maximum of fifteen (15) percent.
2. The parking requirement may be reduced only if the reduction is supported by a recommendation of the Project Advisory Committee formed to review the DOPAR community center, and the Director determines and makes written findings that:
  - a. The lower parking requirement is necessary to preserve existing natural features or recreational facilities deemed significant by DOPAR and the Project Advisory Committee formed to review the DOPAR community center, and the reduction is the minimum necessary to preserve such features and/or facilities; and
  - b. The surrounding streets can accommodate overflow parking from the combined community center and family support center or, alternatively, any adverse parking impacts on the neighborhood from the combined community center and family support center will be mitigated.

J. Parking for City-recognized Car-sharing Programs.

1. For any development, one (1) space or up to five (5) percent of the total number of required spaces, whichever is greater, may be used to provide parking for vehicles operated by a car-sharing program. The number of required parking spaces will be reduced by one (1) space for every parking space leased by a car-sharing program.
2. For any development requiring twenty (20) or more parking spaces under Section 23.54.015  that provides a space for vehicles operated by a car-sharing program, the number of required parking spaces may be reduced by the lesser of three (3) required parking spaces for each car-sharing space or fifteen (15) percent of the total number of required spaces. In order to gain this exception, an agreement between the property owner and a car-sharing program must be approved by the Director and the agreement, along with a notice that the agreement is the basis for this exception to the parking requirement, must be recorded with the title to the property before a Master Use Permit is issued.

K. Peat Settlement-prone Environmentally Critical Areas. Except in Single-family, Residential Small Lot, and Lowrise zones, the Director may reduce or waive the minimum accessory off-street parking requirements to the minimum extent necessary to offset underground

parking potential lost to limitations set forth in Section 25.09.110  on

development below the annual high static groundwater level in peat settlement-prone areas. In making any such reduction or waiver, the Director will assess area parking needs. The Director may require a survey of on- and off-street parking availability. The Director may take into account the level of transit service in the immediate area; the probable relative importance of walk-in traffic; proposals by the applicant to encourage carpooling or transit use by employees; hours of operation; and any other factor or factors considered relevant in determining parking impact.

L. SM/D/40-85 zone. As a Type I decision pursuant to Chapter 23.76, Procedures for Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions, the Director may reduce required parking for any proposed uses in the SM/D/40-85 zone to a level not less than the amount needed to serve parking demand to be generated by those uses as demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Director by a parking demand study performed by a licensed professional engineer and submitted by the applicant.

(Ord. [122935](#) , Section 14, 2009; Ord. [122835](#) , Section 5, 2008; Ord. [122738](#) , Section 4, 2008; Ord. [122311](#) , Section 70, 2006; Ord. [122054](#) Section 74, 2006; Ord. [121782](#) Section 32, 2005; Ord. [120691](#) Section 16, 2001; Ord. [120535](#) Section 1, 2001; Ord. [120293](#) Section 9, 2001; Ord. [119239](#) Section 30, 1998; Ord. [118794](#) Section 41, 1997; Ord. [118362](#) Section 9, 1996; Ord. [118302](#) Section 14, 1996; Ord. 117869 Section 2, 1995; Ord. 117263 Section 51, 1994; Ord. 114196 Section 17, 1988; Ord. 113710 Section 2, 1987; Ord. 113658 Section 8, 1987; Ord. 113263 Section 27, 1986; Ord. 112777 Section 32(part), 1986.)